



Norwottuck - Mass Central Rail Trail Rehabilitation Project

Public Information Meeting
April 3, 2012



Commonwealth of Massachusetts

Governor

Deval L. Patrick

Lieutenant Governor

Timothy P. Murray

Energy and Environmental Secretary

Richard K. Sullivan, Jr.

Department of Transportation Secretary and CEO

Richard A. Davey

Department of Conservation and Recreation Commissioner

Edward M. Lambert, Jr.

DCR Mission Statement



To protect, promote and enhance our common wealth of natural cultural and recreational resources for the well being of all.

Introduction

Key Players

Project Overview

Guiding Components

Next Steps

Key Players

❑ Owner

- Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR)

❑ Stakeholders

- Elected Officials
- Public
- Norwottuck Rail Trail Advisory Committee
- Local Boards and Commissions
- Various Trail Users and User Groups

❑ Design/Construction Oversight

- DCR and MassDOT



Public Process to Date

- ❑ Initial Public Meeting, October 2008**
- ❑ Pre-Design Survey, 2009**
- ❑ Web Page and List-Serve**
- ❑ Various Public Advisory Committee Meetings, 2009-2012**
- ❑ MEPA Site Visit, July 2010**
- ❑ MEPA Public Comment Period**
- ❑ Various Meetings with Local Boards and Officials**

Project Overview

**Project Purpose
and Need**

Scope of Work

Funding

Schedule

Purpose & Need

□ Project Purpose

- Repair and upgrade the 18-year-old trail to improve public safety, landscape and habitat values, and the user experience

□ Project Need

- Project requires safety improvements to riding surface, bridge decks, and road crossings
- Heavy use requires potential widening of path
- Path requires upgrades to meet accessibility requirements



Scope of Work

- Assess existing conditions and natural resources
- Replace existing trail surface
- Widen trail up to 10-feet where possible
- Evaluate beaver impacts to the trail and develop a plan to manage the effects
- Improve public safety and universal access
- Identify and resolve drainage and erosion problems
- Upgrade trail signage
- Improve to bridge decks and parking lots

Funding & Schedule

□ Funding

- Partnership between DCR, MassDOT, and FHWA
- Federal and state funds
- \$6,900,000

□ Schedule

- Design phase is scheduled for completion in 2012
- Construction phase planned to begin in 2013

Recent Investments

- Patching and repairs to the trail surface
- Repairs of beaver damage
- Tree trimming and hazard tree removal
- Designing repair to erosion area
- Snell Street Bridge replacement

Guiding Components

Safety

Path/Infrastructure Repairs

Accessibility

Trail/User Experience

Guiding Components



Safety



Glass Aggregate

❑ Issue:

- Pavement contains recycled glass aggregate
- Tire punctures

❑ Solution:

- Remove / Reclaim asphalt and resurface (without glass)



Root Damage

□ Issue:

- Systemic root damage
- Main Culprit: Black Locust and other select species



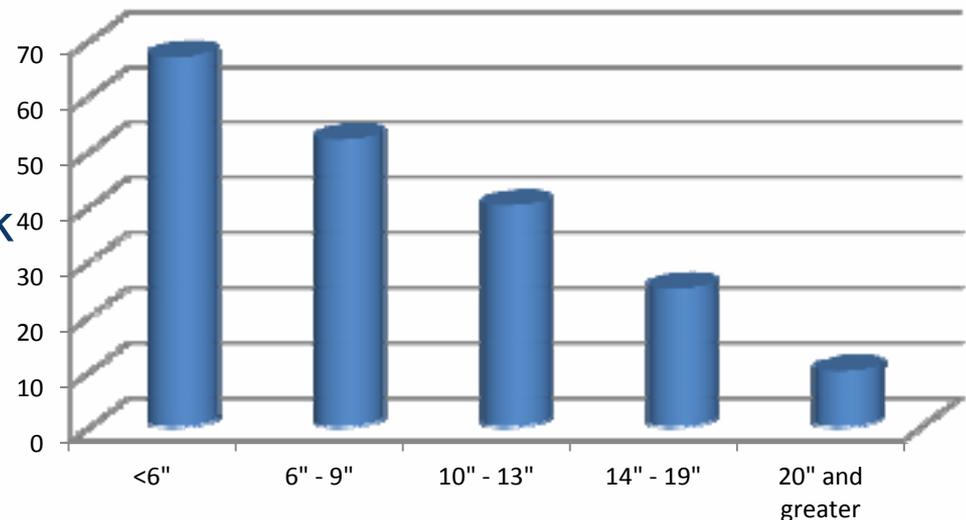
□ Solution:

- Remove roots as part of path repavement and remove select trees causing damage

Tree Removal

□ Concerns raised over extensive tree removal

- Evaluated each tree for evidence of root damage
- Designed to avoid clearing along path
- Site turn-arounds to avoid extensive tree removal
- Proposing to removal 194 trees, only 35 > 14" dbh
- Larger trees are mostly black locust



Heavy/Mixed Use

□ Issue:

- Congestion
- 8' width substandard

□ Solutions:

- Widen path where feasible



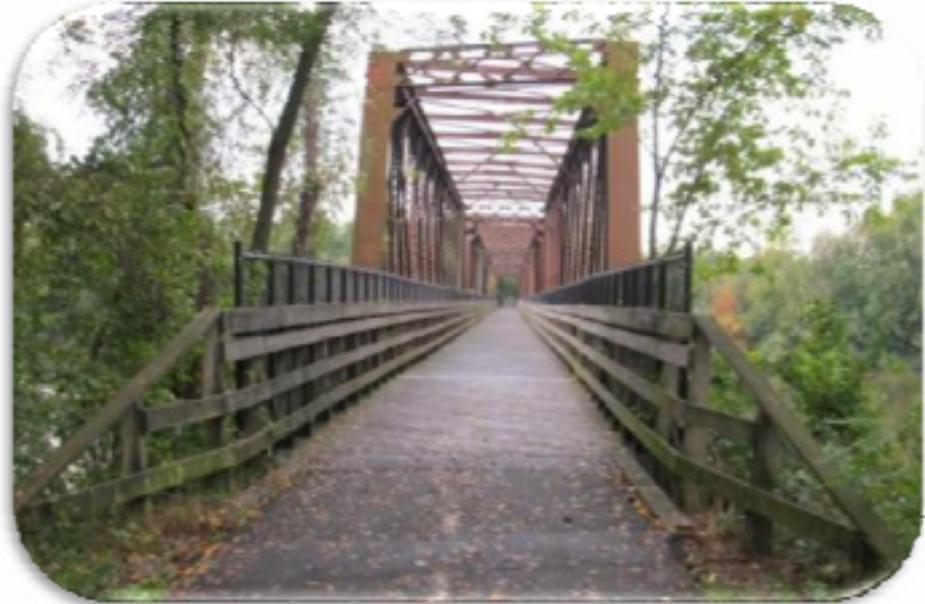
Guiding Components

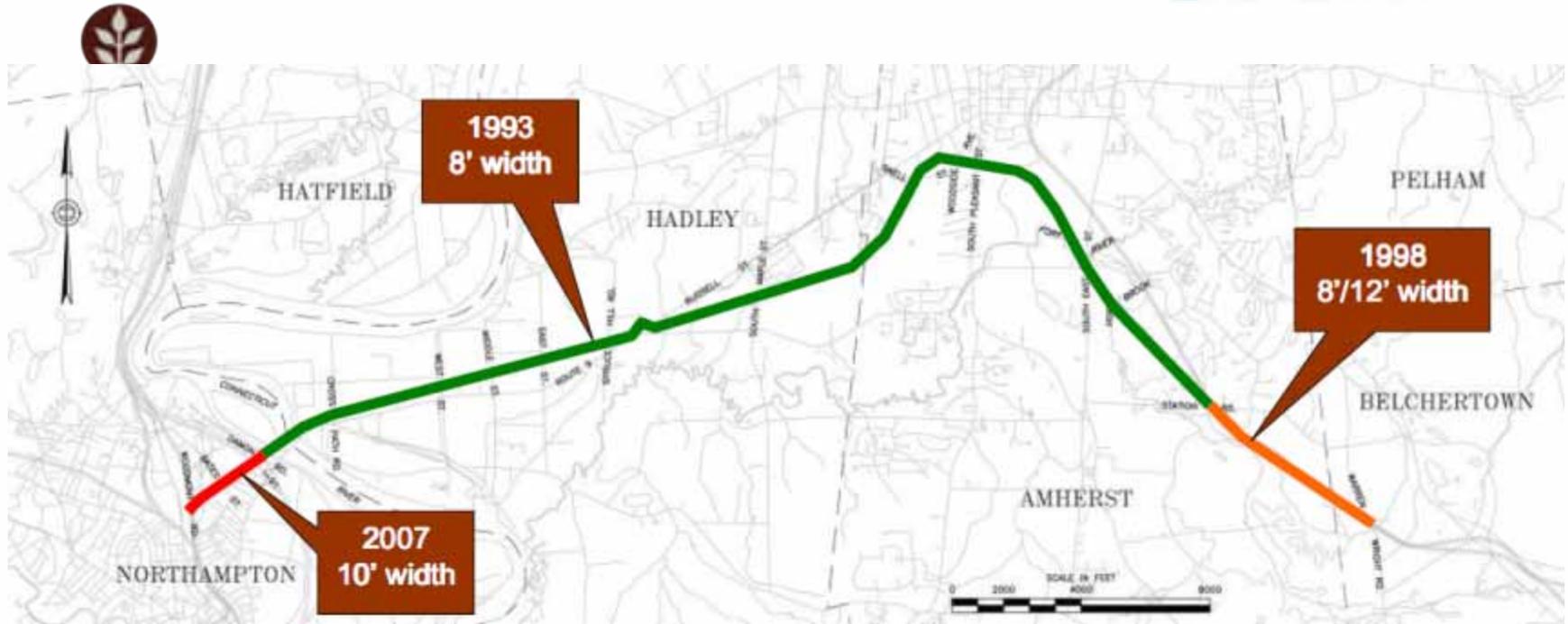
Path/Infrastructure Repairs



Major Elements

- ❑ **Trail**
 - 11 miles of path
- ❑ **Bridge**
 - 5 major bridges
- ❑ **Tunnels**
 - 3 box culverts



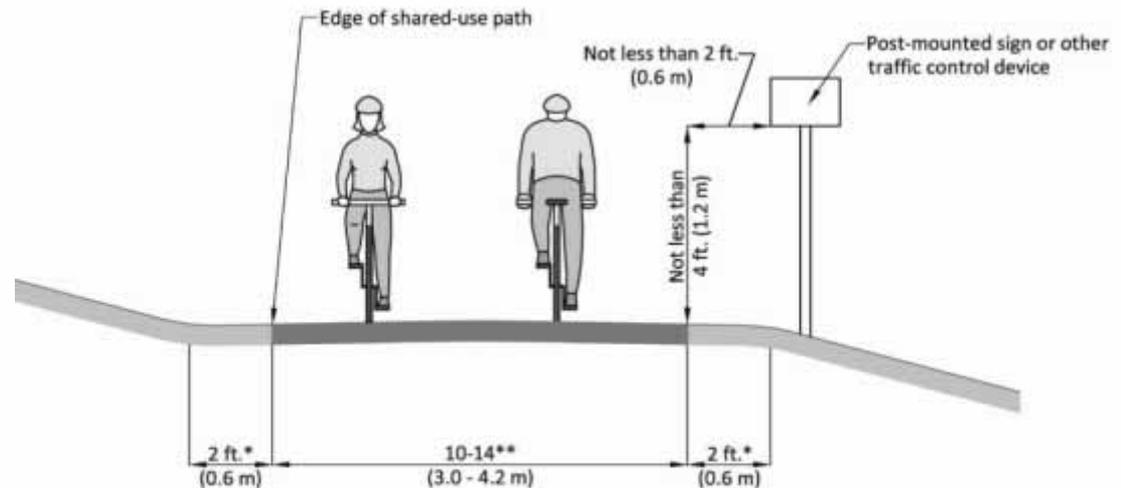


- ❑ 1993 – Northampton to Amherst
 - 8.5 miles from Damon Road to Station Road built in 1993
- ❑ 1998 – Amherst/Belchertown
 - 1.5 miles extension from Station Road to Warren Wright Road
- ❑ 2007 – Northampton
 - 0.74 mile extension from Woodmont Road to Damon Road

Trail Widening

□ Issue

- 8' path width is considered substandard for trails with high volume and mixed use. 10' minimum and in many cases 12'-14' are considered more desirable (AASHTO Standard).



*6:1 Maximum Slope (typ.)

** More if necessary to meet anticipated volumes and mix of users, per the Shared Use Path Level of Service Calculator (4)



Trail Widening

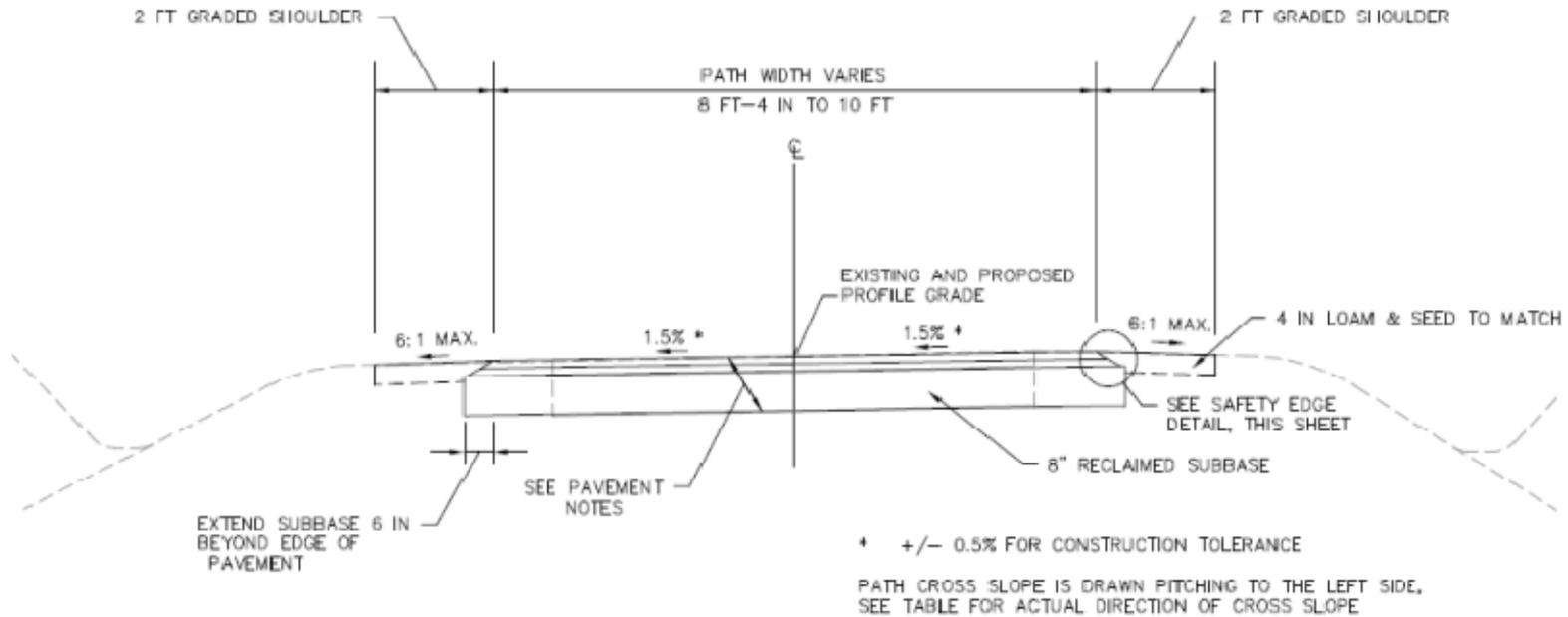
❑ **Concerns:**

- Wetland impacts
- Tree cutting

❑ **Solutions:**

- Widening only in areas where impacts can be avoided.
- The path will be rehabilitated at its current width where widening is not possible.
- Variable width that minimizes wetland impacts and improves the capacity of the trail (8.33, 9.5, 10 feet).
- A section in Belchertown has been eliminated.

Typical Sections



RAIL TRAIL TYPICAL SECTION

PREFERRED SHOULDER WIDTH

Proposed 10 FT Path



Cross Path Road



Grandpa's Bench

Note: Widening only in areas where impacts can be avoided.

Proposed 9.5 FT Path



After Route 9 tunnel



Near Wal-Mart

Note: The section from Route 9 tunnel to Wal-Mart is only widening to 9.5 ft to avoid wetland impact.

Maintain Current Width

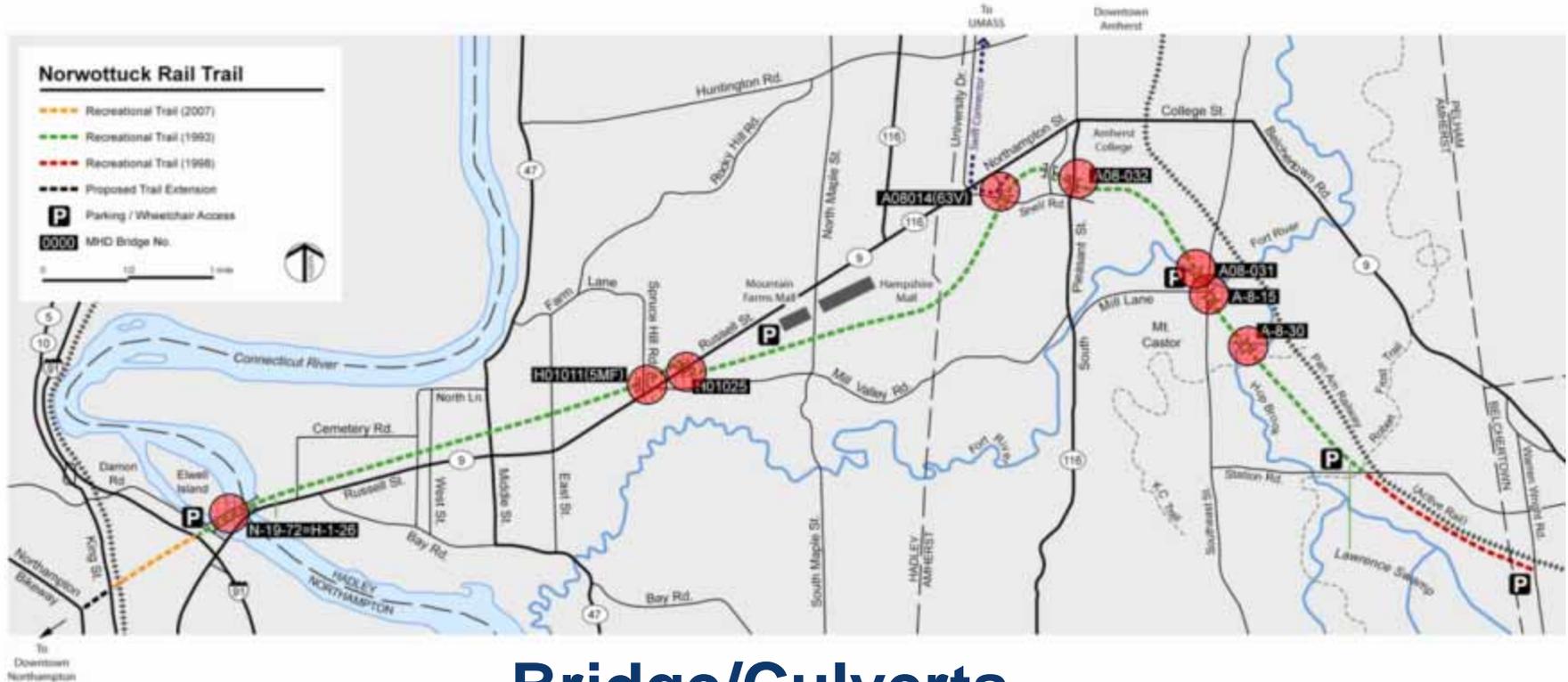


Spruce Hill Road



Hop Brook

Note: The path will be rehabilitated at its current width where widening is not possible.



Bridge/Culverts

- Connecticut River
- Spruce Hill Road
- Russell Street/Rte 9
- Snell Street
- South Pleasant Street / Rt 116
- Hop Brook
- Southeast Street
- Fort River



Bridge Work

- Bridges:
 - Fort River
 - Southeast Street
 - Hop Brook

- Connecticut River and Snell Street will be rehabilitated by DCR under a separate contract

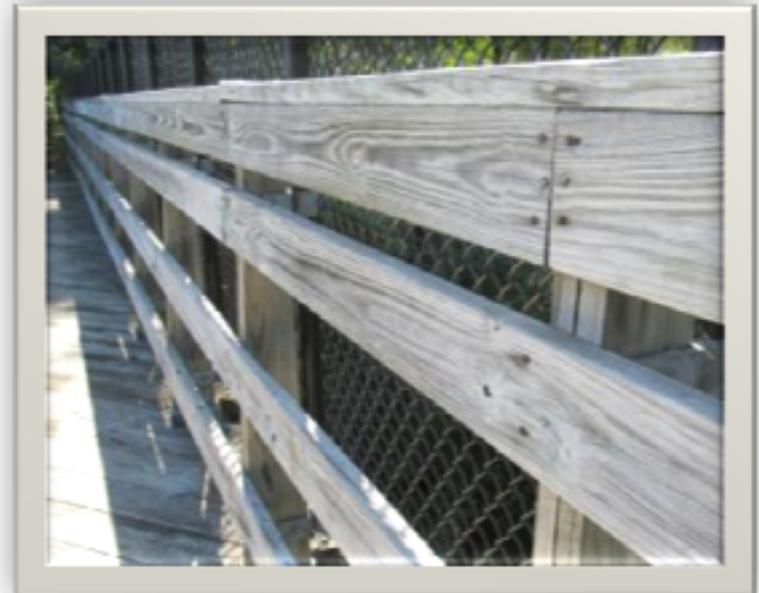




Bridge Work

□ Solutions:

- Replace wood decking and wood railing
- Maintain existing bridge width
- Possible widening of decking and railings where this would avoid impacts





At-Grade Crossings

- Damon Road
- Cross Path
- West Street
- Middle Street
- East Street
- South Maple Street
- Station Road

Street Crossing

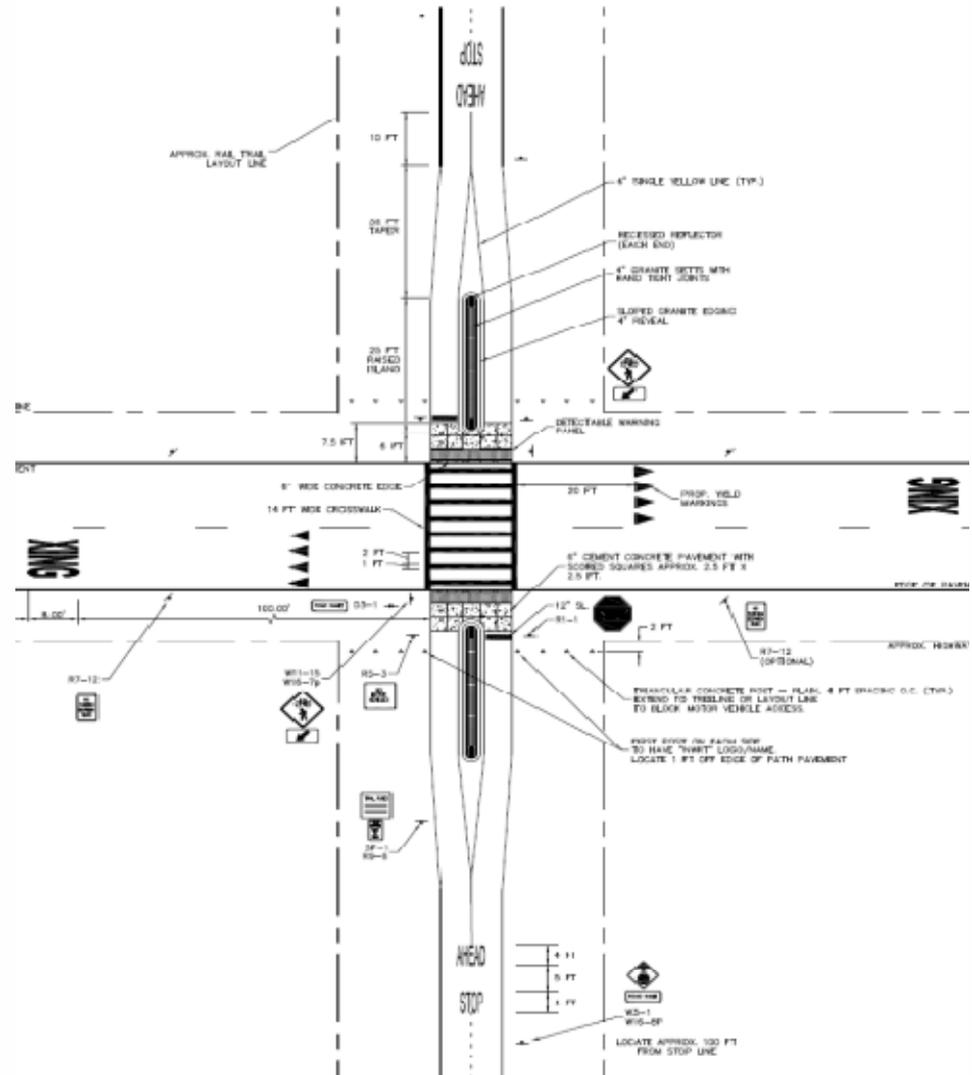
- **Issue:**
 - Safety concerns



Street Crossing

□ Solution:

- Improved Signage
- Pavement Markings
- Splitter Islands



South Maple Street





Pedestrian Hybrid Beacon

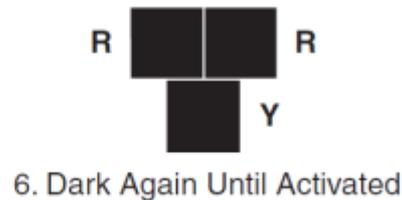
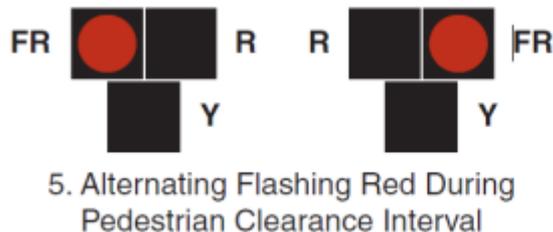
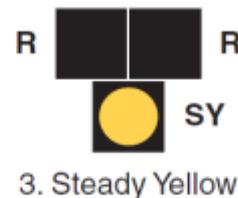
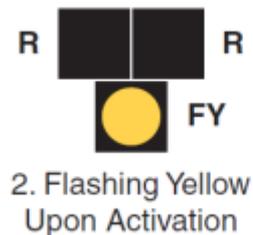
PHB is a special type of hybrid beacon used to warn and control traffic at an un-signalized location to assist pedestrians in crossing a street or highway at a marked crosswalk. (MUTCD 2009)





Pedestrian Hybrid Beacon

PHB remains dark until a pedestrian presses a pushbutton to activate the system. When activated, the system flashes a sequence of amber warning beacons followed by red "stop" beacons, providing motorists with an unmistakable message to stop. The PHB system includes count-down pedestrian signal heads that provide "walk" and "don't walk" signals to inform pedestrians when it is safe to cross.



- Legend
- SY Steady yellow
 - FY Flashing yellow
 - SR Steady red
 - FR Flashing red



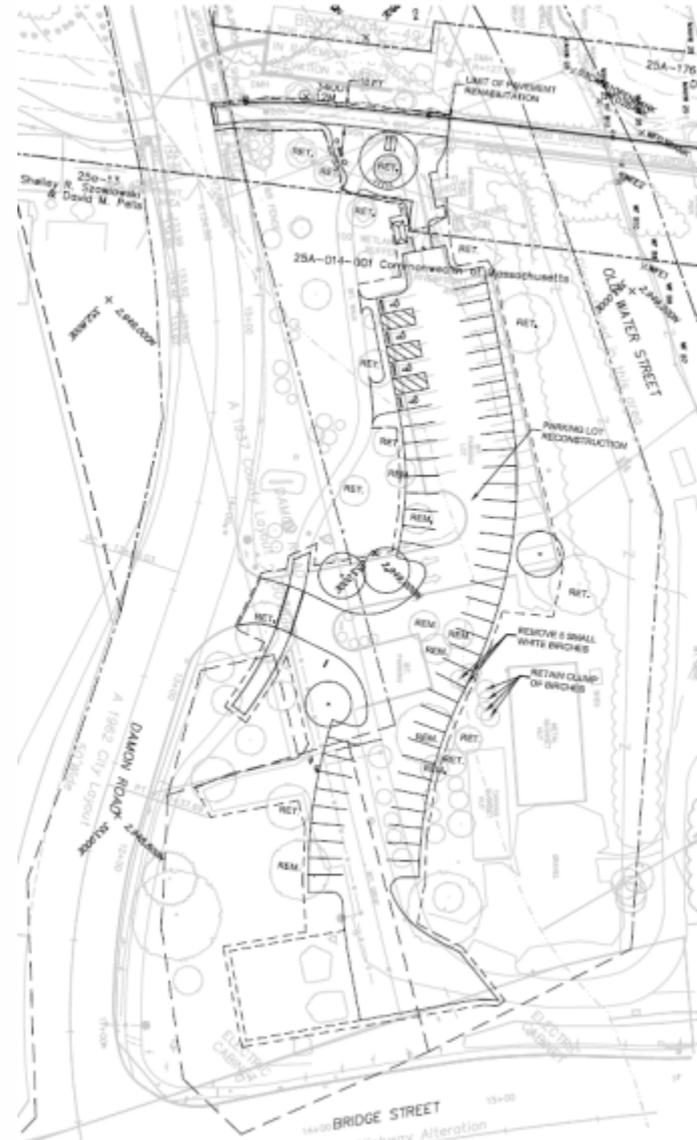
Parking

□ Issue:

- Damon Road often full

□ Solution:

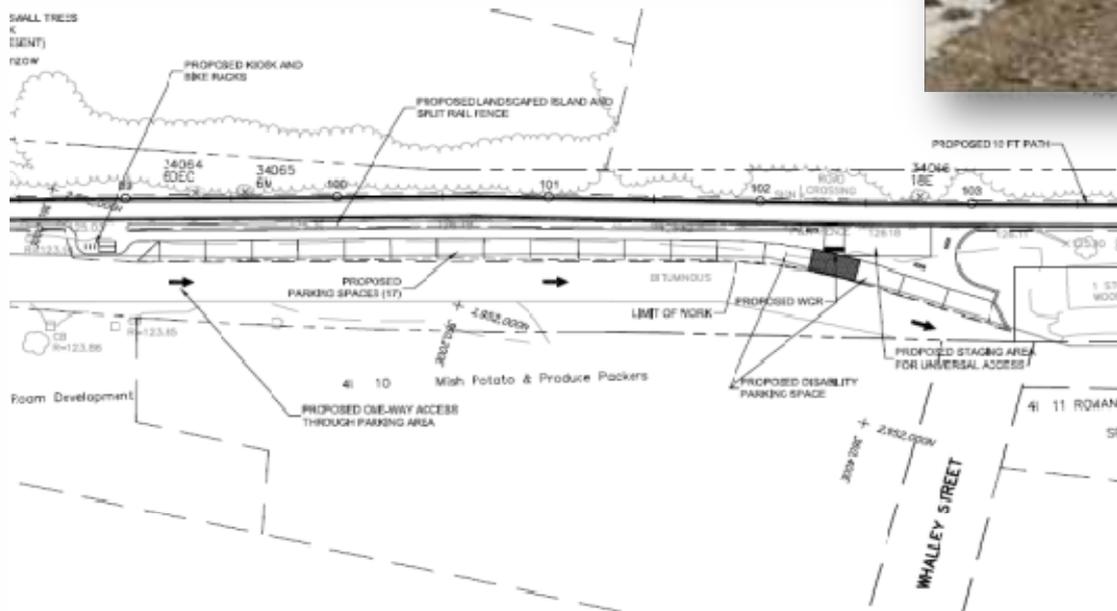
- Parking lot Reconstruction





Proposed Parking Lot

- ❑ Location: along Railroad Street
- ❑ Spaces: approximately 20 spaces



- ❑ Would require changing Railroad Street to one-way, from west to east

Trail Signage

❑ Issue:

- Faded, out-dated

❑ Solution:

- Upgrade and improve





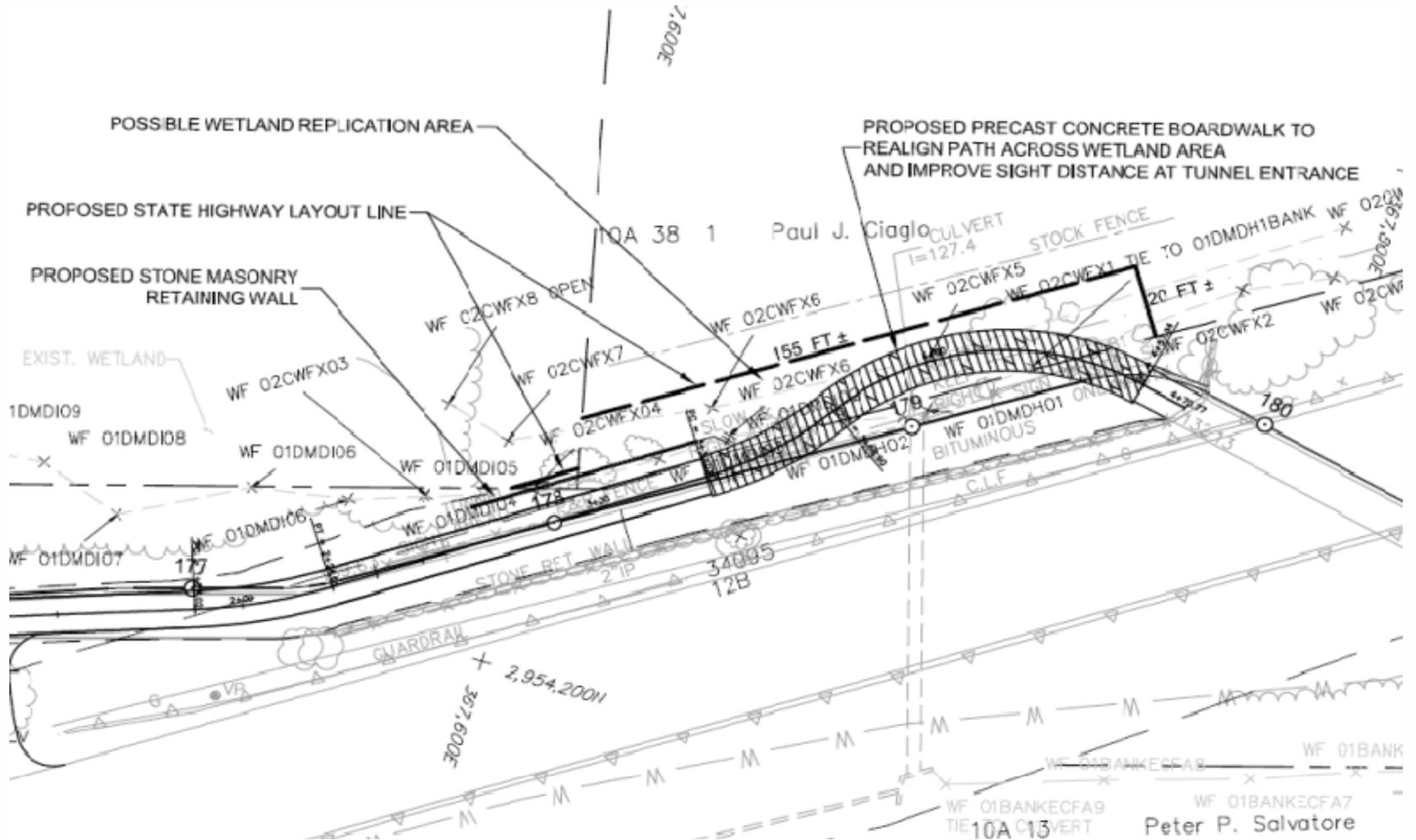
Route 9 Tunnel

□ Issue:

- Sharp curve
- Limited sight distance



Route 9 Tunnel



Route 9 Tunnel

□ Solution:

- Re-alignment of north side approach
- A pre-cast concrete boardwalk to reduce wetland impacts



Glastonbury, CT



Guiding Components

Accessibility

Accessibility

□ Issue:

- Some areas of path do not meet current ADA/AAB requirements
- Provision of access for:
 - People with disabilities
 - Elderly
 - Adults with strollers
 - Small children
 - Rollerbladers
 - Other

Accessibility

□ Solution:

- Rehabilitate path to meet requirements
- Integrate needs of UA program



Guiding Components

Trail/User Experience



Corridor Views

□ Issue:

- Numerous views along corridor of adjacent fields, farms and, significant landscape features such as the Holyoke Range

□ Solutions

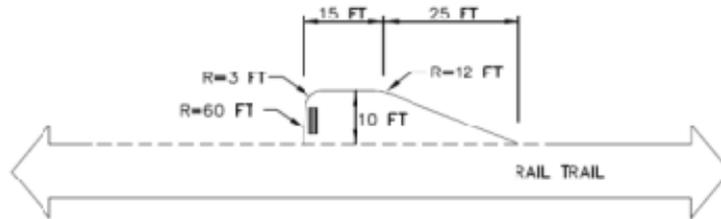
- Preserve and enhance views
- Add scenic rest stops



Pull Off Area

DESCRIPTION

- PULL-OFF AREA WITH BENCH
- LOCATED AT ROAD CROSSINGS



CATCH-UP / TURN AROUND AREA

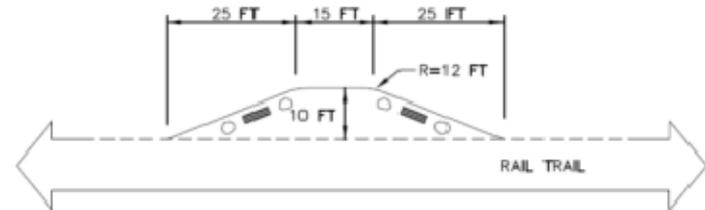
SCALE: 1" = 20'-0"

STA ___+___ RT

STA ___+___ LT

DESCRIPTION

- PULL-OFF AREA
- BENCHES AND BOULDERS
- LOCATED MID-BLOCK



TURN AROUND AREA

SCALE: 1" = 20'-0"

STA ___+___ RT

STA ___+___ LT

Open Space

□ Issue:

- Rail Trail adjoins numerous open space and conservation areas

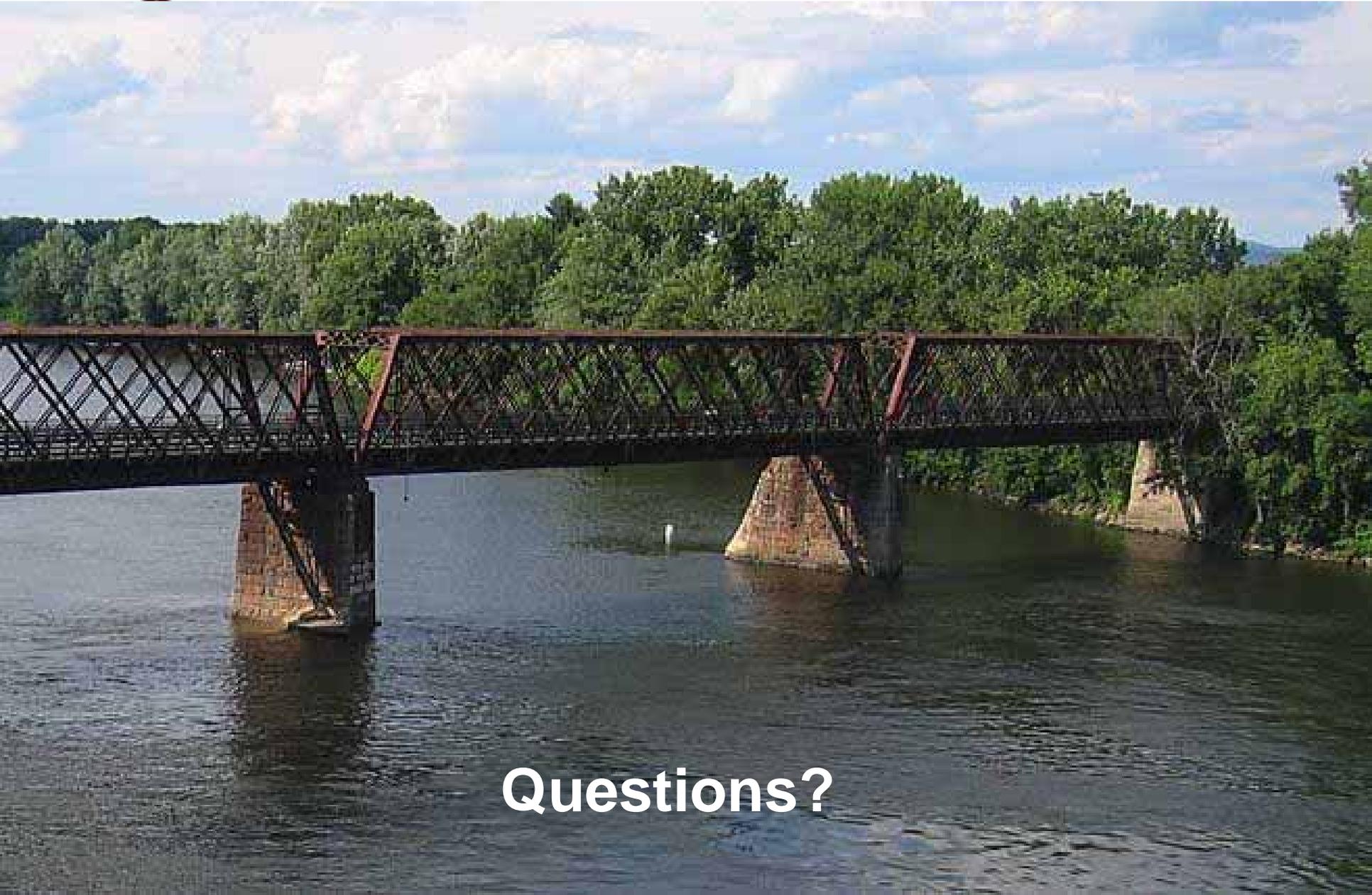
□ Solutions

- Integrate existing connections into trail design
- Incorporate signage



Next Steps

- ❑ 21-day public input period
- ❑ 25% design public hearing (May / June, 2012)
- ❑ Complete permitting (summer / fall, 2012)
- ❑ Final design public meeting (spring, 2013)
- ❑ Construction (summer 2013)



Questions?



Input, Comments, Feedback Additional Information

-Web: www.mass.gov/dcr/news/publicmeetings/greenwaysgeneralpast.htm

If you have questions, comments, or suggestions:

Email: dcr.updates@state.ma.us, noting "Norwottuck Rail Trail" in subject line

Call: 617-626-4974

Write: Department of Conservation and Recreation, Office of Public Outreach,
251 Causeway Street, Suite 600, Boston, MA 02114

Note: Public comments submitted to DCR by email or letter will be posted on the DCR website in their entirety, and no content, including personal information, will be redacted.